A SILENT VOICE

YOSHITOKI OIMA
UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE JAPANESE FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

CHAPTER 15: HAPPY NEWS

...TO SEE NISHI-MIYA!
I'VE GOTTA GET THIS UM-BRELLA BACK TO HER.

MY, AREN'T WE PRO-ACTIVE!
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT, STU-PID!

SHRP

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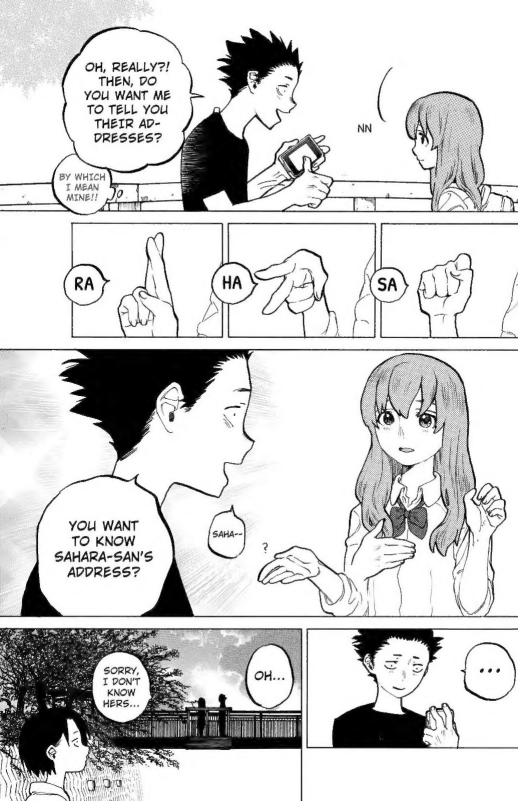
...
!
SHO-CHAN! AREN'T YOU GOING TO ASK FOR HER CONTACT INFORMATION?
NN
C-COME TO THINK OF IT...
DO YOU, LIKE, TEXT AND STUFF, NISHIMIYA?
TOSS
NN
YOU MEAN THE ONES FROM SCHOOL?
OH, SO YOU TEXT WITH YOUR FRIENDS?
...
YOU PROBABLY DON'T, LIKE...WANT TO TEXT ANYONE FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL... DO YOU?
LIKE ME FOR INSTANCE.
W-WOW, THAT SOUNDS GREAT...BY THE WAY...


OH, REALLY?! THEN, DO YOU WANT ME TO TELL YOU THEIR ADDRESSES?
BY WHICH I MEAN MINE!!
NN
RA
HA
SA
YOU WANT TO KNOW SAHARA-SAN'S ADDRESS?
SAHA--
?
SORRY, I DON'T KNOW HERS...
OH...
...

SHE DIDN'T REALLY STAND OUT MUCH.
MIYOKO SAHARA
...SHE STOPPED COMING TO SCHOOL.
HYPO-CRITE.
AFTER SHE STARTED BEING FRIENDS WITH NISHI-MIYA...
I ASKED NISHIMIYA.
YOU WANT TO KNOW...
WHAT HAPPENED TO SAHARA-SAN?

I WAS ASHAMED OF MYSELF.
SHE KNEW FULL WELL SAHARA STOPPED COMING TO SCHOOL BECAUSE OF HER.
EVEN AS A KID, NISHIMIYA KNEW.
AND WITHOUT REALIZING THAT...
WITHOUT EVEN MAKING AN EFFORT TO FIND OUT...
I JUST...ASSUMED THAT NISHIMIYA WAS SOME CLUELESS IDIOT...I WANTED TO GO BACK TO THE 6TH GRADE AND PUNCH MYSELF.
"SHE WAS HURT...
"BECAUSE OF ME."

...
MORN-ING.
I HATE THESE MAKE-UP EXAMS.
SO NAGA-TSUKA-KUN'S NOT HERE YET?
KREEK
GOOD MORN-ING.
OH, ISHIDA-KUN'S HERE.
OH, YOU'RE RIGHT.
"HE ACTUALLY CAME TO SCHOOL."
"HAS HE NO SHAME?"
"I'M AMAZED HE CAN SHOW HIS FACE."
...
HEY, ISHIDA-KUN.
TELL ME WHAT THAT ARTICLE WAS ABOUT.
I REALLY WANNA KNOW.
OH... SURE...
WOOSH
HEY, DON'T TEASE MY FRIEND!!

LISTEN, YOU! ISHIDA-KUN JUMPED INTO THE RIVER TO SAVE A DROWNING KITTEN!!
NAGA-TSUKA-KUN!
SO STOP TREATING HIM AS A SOURCE OF AMUSE-MENT!!
ISHIDA-KUN IS A GOOD GUY!!
THANKS, NAGATSUKA-KUN...
BUT I DIDN'T SAVE ANY CATS...
はは
HAHA
~SIGH~
WHAT? SO THAT WAS JUST ANOTHER OF NAGA-TSUKA'S LIES?
STAY OUT OF THIS! LEAVE THE PUBLIC RELATIONS TO ME!!
WHAT DO I NEED...WITH PUBLIC RE-LATIONS?
YOU'RE ALL BLOW-ING THIS WAY OUT OF PRO-PORTION.

HUH, SO YOU KNOW ISHIDA-KUN PRETTY WELL, KAWAI-SAN?
YOU MIGHT SAY THAT.

ISHIDA-KUN HAS ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THAT.

KAWAI...
...
WE'VE BEEN IN THE SAME CLASS SINCE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL...

ISHIDA-KUN?

THUNK

WUH... WHAT IS IT?
I'M SORRY. DID I SAY SOMETHING WRONG?
OH, NO. NOTHING LIKE THAT...
I JUST WANTED TO ASK YOU...
SAHARA-SAN?
...SORRY, I'M AFRAID I CAN'T HELP YOU WITH THAT...
DO YOU KNOW HOW I CAN GET IN CONTACT WITH SAHARA-SAN FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL?
OH, BUT...

NAO-CHAN SAID THEY WERE GOING TO THE SAME SCHOOL...
SO YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIND HER AT TAIYO GIRLS ACADEMY...
...!
TH-
THANK YOU, KAWAI-SAN!
SHE'S SO NICE!
YOU'RE WEL-COME.
...
YOU'RE GOING TO SEE HER, RIGHT?!
THIS "SAHARA-SAN"?
ISHIDA-KUN'S KIND OF A STRANGE GUY, HUH?
YOU COULD SAY THAT.
ALL RIGHT, TO YOUR DESKS, EVERY-ONE.
カラン

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE MONEY, YA-SHO.
YA-SHO?
I PLAN ON STRIKING IT RICH IN THE FUTURE, SO I'LL SPOT YOU THE CASH.
HERE.
BOY, IT'S PRETTY FAR, HUH? JUST ONE WAY IS ¥800...
HUH? UH-OH, I'M RUNNING KIND OF LOW ON CASH...
LOVE HOTEL?
HEY, WE'RE HERE!
YOU IDIOT!! ONCE YOU FACTOR IN TRAVEL, MEAL, AND LOVE HOTEL EXPENSES, WON'T YOU FEEL BETTER HAVING A LITTLE EXTRA?
¥30,000 ?!!!
I DON'T NEED THAT MUCH!!
*AROUND ¥300

WAIT, DID YOU CALL THEM?
SURE DID.

SIS SAYS SHE'S PISSED YOU WERE GONNA LEAVE HER BEHIND EVEN THOUGH THIS INVOLVES HER.
TAKE HER WITH YOU, ISHIDA.
BOW

NN
OBVIOUSLY, SCHOOL'S OVER NOW, SO CHANCES ARE PRETTY HIGH SAHARA-SAN WON'T EVEN BE THERE. DO YOU STILL WANT TO GO?
SEE YA, NISHI-MIYA-SAN.
HUH?! YOU'RE NOT COMING WITH ME?!
...
WE'RE GONNA BE ALONE THE WHOLE WAY THERE?!
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW EMBARRASSING THAT IS?!

ガタン
KLANK
ゴトン
KLUNK
ガタン
KLANK
ゴトン
KLUNK

GLANCE
GLANCE
...
...
PHOTOS
->ZZZZZ<-
->ZZZZZ<-
->YAWN<-
OH MAN, LOOK AT THAT BILL-BOARD...
PHOTOS

OH...A TEXT? FROM NAGA-TSUKA-KUN?
NO, WAIT- WHOSE ADDRESS IS THIS?

nichinichisou060
Are you tired?
Thank you for tod
happy to hea
for Sat

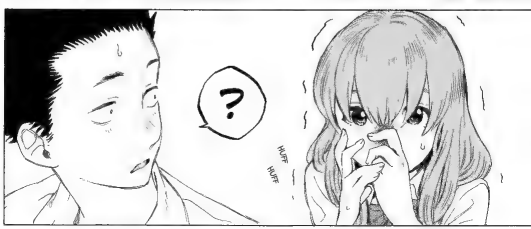
...?!
...

THANK YOU FOR TODAY. IT MADE ME HAPPY TO HEAR YOU WERE LOOKING FOR SAHARA-SAN.
KLUNK
KLANK
ACTUALLY, TODAY I HEARD SOME EVEN HAPPIER NEWS FROM MY SISTER.
THAT YOU HELPED HER WHEN SHE RAN AWAY FROM HOME...
...AND THAT YOU HELPED HER SEARCH FOR ME.

■TO BE CONTINUED!

SHOKO'S "VOICE" COMES THROUGH THE LCD SCREEN. SHOYA WANTS TO FIND SAHARA AND HEAR MORE OF IT.

WE'D BETTER HURRY, NISHI-MIYA...
I WONDER IF SAHARA-SAN IS STILL AT SCHOOL...
ACCORDING TO THE MAP, IT'S...
TEP
TEP
OH, SO IT'S THIS WAY?
TEP
TEP
TEP
TEP
TEP
TEP
A SILENT VOICE
SHOYA AND SHOKO SEARCH FOR THEIR FORMER CLASSMATE SAHARA. IT IS A QUEST TO FACE THE "PAIN" FROM THOSE DAYS...
YOSHITOKI OIMA
UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE JAPANESE FEDERATION OF THE DEAF



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CHAPTER 16: WHAT I TOOK FROM HER

DO YOU KNOW HOW I CAN GET IN CONTACT WITH HER?
NOPE, SORRY.
PLUS... YOU'RE KIND OF SCARING US. WHO ARE YOU?
...
GUESS WE WERE TOO LATE...
LET'S GO, NISHI-MIYA.
THEY SAID SHE'S GONE.
SORRY.
"THANK YOU." HUH? NOW I'VE MADE HER WORRY ABOUT ME...
...ON TOP OF EXHAUSTING HER WITH THIS ROUND TRIP WE WASTED ¥1,600 ON...
MAN, I AM JUST USE-LESS...

KLUNK
KLANK
KLANK
KLUNK
...

I NEED SOME-THING FUN TO TALK ABOUT...
IF WE GO HOME LIKE THIS, THE ONLY THING WE'RE GONNA REMEMBER ABOUT TODAY IS GETTING TIRED...
UGH...I GUESS I SHOULD SAY SOME-THING...

I WONDER WHERE NISHIMIYA USUALLY HANGS OUT.
...PROBABLY NOT THE KARAOKE PLACE, HUH?
I WONDER IF IT'D BE WRONG TO ASK ABOUT HER FAMILY...
LIKE HER MOM...
LIKE... WHAT SHE THINKS ABOUT YUZURU NOT GOING TO SCHOOL...
I WONDER WHAT KIND OF SCHOOL SHE GOES TO NOW.
SHE SAID IT'S FUN AND THAT SHE HAS FRIENDS THERE, BUT...
...I BET THAT "FUN" FEELING...
IS THE KIND OF FUN SHE MISSED OUT ON BACK IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, HUH?
DAMN IT... NOW I'VE BUMMED MYSELF OUT AGAIN...
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN TALK ABOUT ANYTHING FUN WHEN I'M LIKE THIS...
BECAUSE OF ME...

LAST STOP. THIS IS THE LAST STOP ON THIS LINE.
IN THE END, I COULDN'T DO ANY-THING.
W-WELL, GUESS THIS IS WHERE WE SPLIT UP, NISHI-MIYA.
SEE YA.
THEY'RE SO LUCKY! I WANNA LEARN SIGN LAN-GUAGE!
DID YOU SEE THAT? THOSE TWO WERE USING SIGN LAN-GUAGE!
...
THAT'S NO WAY TO TALK, GIRLS.

I WONDER IF SHE HEARS CONVERSATIONS LIKE THAT.
I WONDER WHAT SHE'D THINK IF SHE DID...

GUNGUNK
AHHH...I'VE GOT SO MANY QUESTIONS I CAN'T ASK EVEN IF I WANTED TO...
DO I REALLY HAVE TO THINK LIKE THIS EVERY TIME I'M AROUND NISHIMIYA?

Tomohiro Nagatsuka
Sensei's gonna be pissed!
Jeez, declaring ahead of time you're gonna be late...What a classy fellow you are...
Well, that is why I like you.
What about you?
If you're gonna leave me alone, you better find this Sahara girl okay? lol
THE TRAIN WILL DEPART MOMENTARILY.
I'M READY FOR IT, NAGATSUKA-KUN...

PLEASE DO NOT RUN AS YOU BOARD THE TRAIN.
WHAM!
STOMP
STOMP
WHOA!
GH... TALK ABOUT PACK-ED...
!
...
...
...

SKREEEEE
イイイイ
-:HURK:-
EEK
イイ
WOW, THIS GIRL IS TALL...
...
I-
I'M SORRY.

WAH!

OH!
I KNEW IT...

WHOA!
WHAP
ARE... ARE YOU OKAY?

THUD
GEH!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, ISHIDA-KUN?
IT'S ME... SAHARA.
DO YOU REMEMBER ME?

I RE-MEMBER YOU!

I-

ACTUALLY, I SPOTTED YOU AT THE STATION...
...AND FOLLOW-ED YOU.

GLIM

?!

I JUST SAW AN ARTICLE ON THE INTERNET THE OTHER DAY THAT MADE ME THINK "WOW, THAT TAKES ME BACK" AND "BOY, HE HASN'T CHANGED A BIT."
THAT WAS YOU, WASN'T IT?
HAHA... YEAH.
BUT THAT ARTICLE WAS FAKE...

UPSY-DAISY
DON'T WORRY!

OH... CAN YOU STAND?

GOOD MORNING, SAHARA-SENPAI!
WOULD YOU LIKE TO WALK TO SCHOOL WITH US?
SEE YOU, ISHIDA-KUN.
TAKE CARE!
OH!

~PHEW~
PAT

WUH-WAIT!
THERE'S SOME-ONE WHO WANTS TO SEE YOU!

YEAH.
SHOULD WE GET GOING?
AFTER SCHOOL
SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING!

LET'S GO SEE NISHIMIYA-SAN.

BUT I'VE BEEN SEEING HER PRETTY OFTEN LATELY.
THESE DAYS...WELL, WE'RE STILL NOT EXACTLY WHAT YOU WOULD CALL CLOSE...
OH... YEAH... NOT WHEN WE WERE KIDS...
YOU AND NISHIMIYA-SAN REALLY DIDN'T SEEM LIKE FRIENDS TO ME...
BY THE WAY, ISHIDA-KUN...
KUN

I WISH I *HAD* GOTTEN TO KNOW HER WELL ENOUGH TO SEE HER OFTEN.
NO...
I'D LIKE TO GET TO KNOW HER WELL ENOUGH TO SEE HER OFTEN...
YOU'RE LUCKY.
SHE ONLY CAME BACK FOR GRADUATION DAY.
SO SHE DIDN'T SEE HOW I TREATED NISHIMIYA.
SAHARA STOPPED COMING TO SCHOOL...
SHE WAS READING SOME BOOK THE WHOLE TIME.
I ONLY SAW HER ONCE DURING MIDDLE SCHOOL.
ONE DAY WHEN I WENT TO THE NURSE'S OFFICE.
BY THEN, NISHIMIYA HAD ALREADY TRANSFERRED.
THAT DAY, SAHARA DIDN'T SPEAK TO ANYONE.

I WAS READ-ING...
A SIGN LANGUAGE BOOK.

COME TO THINK OF IT...
YOU DID VOLUNTEER TO STUDY SIGN LANGUAGE IN SIXTH GRADE, DIDN'T YOU?
YEP! THAT'S THE ONE THING I'VE KEPT DOING ALL THESE YEARS!

YOU WERE ?!!!
IN THE NURSE'S OFFICE?
YEP.

BUT I'VE STILL GOT A LONG WAY TO GO...
AND I STILL HAVEN'T USED IT ONCE...
BUT...I'M ABOUT TO GET MY CHANCE...
I'M SO HAPPY...

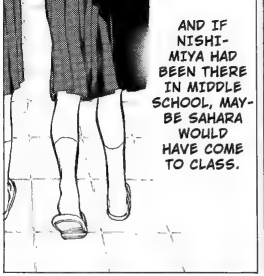
OH...
WHO AM I?

SHAHARA-SHA...

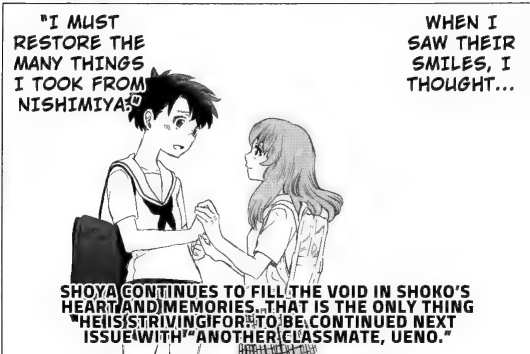
!
EHEHEH. LONG TIME NO SEE.

OH, THE SIGN LANGUAGE?
YEAH, I DON'T KNOW MUCH, BUT I DID STUDY A LITTLE.
PLUS... YOU TAUGHT ME SOME WHEN WE WERE KIDS, SHO-CHAN.

I'M SORRY...
FOR DIS-APPEARING ON YOU...
BACK IN SIXTH GRADE...
SO I... WANT TO GIVE IT ANOTHER SHOT.
IT WON'T BRING BACK SHOKO'S RUINED CHILDHOOD!!
NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU STRUGGLE...


AND IF NISHIMIYA HAD BEEN THERE IN MIDDLE SCHOOL, MAYBE SAHARA WOULD HAVE COME TO CLASS.
IF NISHIMIYA HAD BEEN AT SCHOOL ON GRADUATION DAY, MAYBE SAHARA WOULD HAVE SAID SOMETHING.

AND I'M THE ONE WHO TOOK THAT FROM THEM.


"I MUST RESTORE THE MANY THINGS I TOOK FROM NISHIMIYA."
WHEN I SAW THEIR SMILES, I THOUGHT...
SHOYA CONTINUES TO FILL THE VOID IN SHOKO'S HEART AND MEMORIES. THAT IS THE ONLY THING "HE IS STRIVING FOR." TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE WITH "ANOTHER CLASSMATE, UENO."

SEVERAL DAYS AFTER THE REUNION WITH SAHARA. BUT THERE ARE STILL MANY PROBLEMS.

CHAPTER 17: MEANINGFUL PRESENCE

OH, YOU MEAN THIS?
I'M NOT GONNA ENTER THIS.

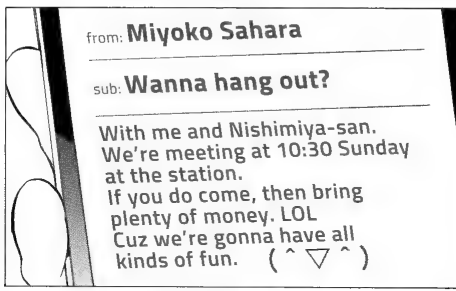
SHALL WE ENTER, ISHIDA-KUN?
ALL RIGHT.

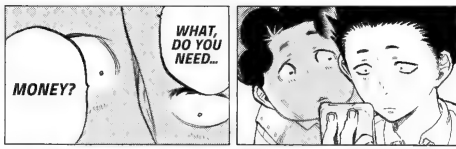
KRUNCH
I DON'T HAVE ANY TALENT FOR IT, AND I'M NOT INTERESTED IN MOVIES.
PLUS, THIS IS OUR SENIOR YEAR. WE DON'T HAVE THAT KIND OF TIME TO WASTE...

AND YOU'LL BE MY ASSISTANT!
DON'T JUST DECIDE THAT ON YOUR OWN!!
YOU JUST LEAVE THAT TO ME!! I'LL BE THE DIRECTOR!

OH, RIGHT... I JUST BARELY MANAGED TO AVOID USING ANY OF THAT.
HERE, YOU CAN HAVE IT BACK.

THAT'S COLD, MY FRIEND!! AND AFTER I LENT YOU ¥30,000 THE OTHER DAY!!


from: Miyoko Sahara
sub: Wanna hang out?
With me and Nishimiya-san.
We're meeting at 10:30 Sunday at the station.
If you do come, then bring plenty of money. LOL
Cuz we're gonna have all kinds of fun. (^ ▽ ^)



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YO...
I CAME AFTER ALL...
...

OH! THERE HE IS!

THE MORE THE MER-RIER!
YEAH, I BROUGHT HIM ALONG. IS THAT OKAY?
OH, ARE YOU ISHI-DA-KUN'S FRIEND?
I AM ISHIDA-KUN'S BEST FRIEND NAGATSUKA. NICE TO MEET YOU.

HELLO.
H-
HELLO, I'M SAHARA.

YAY! YAY!
YAY! YAY!
...
SO, WHERE ARE WE GOING?
THE PLAN'S ALL SET. FOLLOW ME!
FROM BEHIND, I CAN'T SEE NISHIMIYA'S RESPONSES AT ALL...
OH, I LIKE THAT TOO!
WHAP
OH, COME TO THINK OF IT, WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR LUNCH?
...I LOOKED IT UP LAST NIGHT, AND IT LOOKS LIKE THIS ONE HAS THE MOST SONGS.
YAY! YAY!
YAY! YAY!
WHAT? REALLY?! I NEVER WOULD HAVE GUESSED!
BOOM
YEAH, YEAH.
WH-WHAP WH-WHAP
WOW, THAT'S SO EARLY! YOUR MOM ALWAYS WAS STRICT WITH YOUR CURFEW, HUH?
WHAP WHAP
HOW LONG CAN YOU STAY OUT TODAY?

YEAH...
BOY, IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE HAVING A LOT OF FUN.

BOY, YOUR CHEST SURE GOT BIG. WHAT'S YOUR CUP SIZE?
WHAP
WOW!
DAMN IT... THAT SAHARA... SHE'S ASKING ALL THE QUESTIONS I WAS HESITANT TO ASK LIKE IT'S NOTHING...
AND WHAT KIND OF SCHOOL ARE YOU GOING TO, SHO-CHAN?
WHAP WHAP
WOW!
SO, HOW'S YOUR SISTER DOING AT SCHOOL?
WHAP WHAP
HUH?!

SAHARA!!
SQUEEZE
I'LL CHECK FOR MYSELF!
HAHAHA!
...
BOY, SHE'S REALLY LAUGHING, HUH?

SAHARA!
HEY, SAHARA! HOW'S NISHI-MIYA SUPPOSED TO HAVE ANY FUN HERE?!
HUH? IT'S OKAY.
カラオケ
WE'RE HERE!
SHO-CHAN SAID SHE'S ALWAYS WANTED TO TRY KARAOKE.
*"KARAOKE"

SAHARA!
GHHH...
OH...I DIDN'T KNOW THAT... SORRY...

202

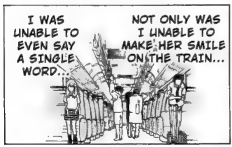
JASRAC Application Pending

HEY, HEY. LET'S SING SOMETHING TOO!
S-S... SAHA-RA...
DON'T YOU THINK WE SHOULD AVOID CHORUS SONGS?
HOW ABOUT A CHORUS SONG LIKE WE SANG BACK IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL?
"DON'T SING," MISS TONE-DEAF!!!
HUH? WHY?

SHE'S ALREADY SINGING.

AND THAT'S WHEN~ PAPA SAID~
TAKE ME~ IN YOUR ARMS~♪
WOW, YOU'RE STILL AS BAD AS EVER, SHO-CHAN.
...!
SAAA! HAAA! RAAA!
SAHARA'S REALLY NICE, BUT... SHE KIND OF PISSES ME OFF...
WHAT IS THIS FEELING?

...AND THE CAUSE IS MY OWN COWARDICE.


I WAS UNABLE TO EVEN SAY A SINGLE WORD...
NOT ONLY WAS I UNABLE TO MAKE HER SMILE ON THE TRAIN...

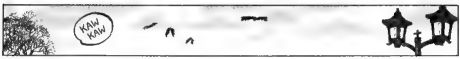
EVEN AFTER YELLING THAT AT THE TOP OF MY LUNGS...
I WANT TO DEDICATE MY LIFE...
TO NISHIMIYA!!

AND SAHARA'S PRESENCE IS MUCH MORE MEANINGFUL TO HER.
MAYBE THE THINGS I THOUGHT WERE IN NISHIMIYA'S BEST INTERESTS ARE THINGS THAT DON'T EVEN MATTER...

YA-SHO!

NAGA-TSUKA-KUN...
YOU COULD AT LEAST LOOK LIKE YOU'RE HAVING FUN...
WE'RE HERE ON MY DIME, YOU KNOW.
I'VE GOTTA AT LEAST GET IN THE SPIRIT!
FWIP
HE'S RIGHT...
GREEN! GREEN!!
THE SUN SMILES~ IN THE BLUE SKY~!!

DID YOU HEAR THAT HARMONY?
OH, NOT BAD!


KAW KAW

WHY DON'T WE ALL TAKE A PICTURE TOGETHER BEFORE WE LEAVE?
OH, A PHOTO BOOTH!
MY THROAT IS RAW...
-PHEW- DID WE SING!

HUH? A PHOTO BOOTH? ONE OF THOSE GIRLY ONES?
I'LL PASS. IT'S TOO EMBARRASSING...
I THINK I'LL PASS TOO.
YOU TWO GO AHEAD. WE'LL WAIT FOR YOU.
OH, SORRY 'BOUT THAT.
THEN, WE'LL ONLY BE A SECOND!

ALL RIGHT, SHOYA.
LET'S YOU AND ME GO TOO.
EEK!
EEK!
...GO WHERE?

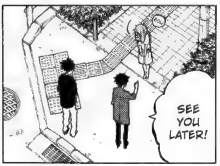
THERE'S NO ROOM FOR WOMEN IN OUR FRIENDSHIP.
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
SMILE!!
THREE, TWO, ONE!!
WE'RE GONNA TAKE A PHOTO TOO!!
BUT YOU JUST SAID--

DAISUKI

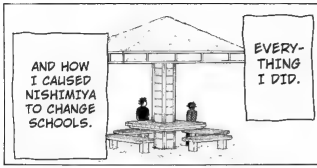
I♥LOVE♥YOU!!

SORRY IT TOOK SO LONG.
WHY DON'T WE HEAD HOME?
HOW CUTE!
SHUNO
I DON'T WANT THIS!!

DON'T FORGET WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT, SHOYA!
...OKAY?
WELL, I'M GOING THIS WAY.


SEE YOU LATER!

WHY DON'T WE GET GOING, SAHARA-SAN?
?
YEAH.
WASN'T TODAY FUN, ISHIDA-KUN?
OH... YEAH, IT WAS.
IT FEELS LIKE WE MADE UP FOR SOME OF THE TIME WE COULDN'T SPEND TOGETHER...
BACK IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.
I FELT LIKE I HAD TO TELL SAHARA.
SAHARA-SAN...
DO YOU HAVE A FEW MINUTES?


AND HOW I CAUSED NISHIMIYA TO CHANGE SCHOOLS.
EVERY-THING I DID.
I TOLD HER EVERY-THING.

SAHARA SIMPLY NODDED ALONG IN SILENCE.

WELL, I'D BETTER GET HOME.
THANKS FOR TEL-LING ME THIS.
SHE LOOKED A LITTLE ANGRY AS SHE LEFT.

It's okay, Ishida-kun.

Since Shoko-chan was smiling, I decided to smile too.

I'll give you this: (⊃ˆ∀

**THANK YOU FOR BRINGING US TOGETHER.*

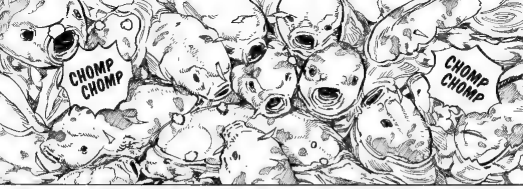
SAHARA!

I THINK I PROBABLY CRIED A LITTLE.

HAIR MAKE ISHIDA

■TO BE CONTINUED!

HE LEARNED SIGN LANGUAGE, FOUND SAHARA, AND SANG AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS. ISHIDA IS DEFINITELY MAKING PROGRESS, ONE STEP AT A TIME.


CHOMP CHOMP
CHOMP CHOMP

CHAPTER 18: I DON'T CARE IN THE LEAST
OH, THEY'RE REALLY WOLFING DOWN THIS BREAD, HUH?
SHOKO AND SAHARA SEEM TO BE HAVING FUN! IT'S A GOOD THING THEY WERE REUNITED!
A SILENT VOICE
YOSHITOKI OIMA
UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE JAPANESE FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

...

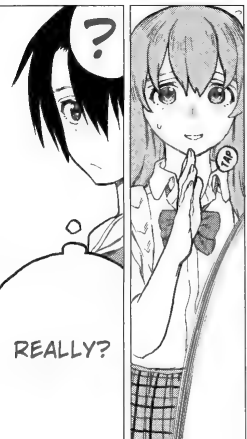
EEK
EEK
THIS IS FUN!

WHO'S THAT?
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE HERE, YUZURU.
ONE OF OUR CLASS-MATES FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.
WAIT, YOU DON'T KNOW HER?
MAYBE I DO AND MAYBE I DON'T. I DON'T KNOW.
SO... WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
...OH, UM... WATCH-ING?
UGH, HOW CREEPY!
OH, YOU MUST BE SHO-CHAN'S SISTER, RIGHT?!
HEY...
I'M YUZU-RU.
I'M SAHARA. NICE TO MEET YOU.
I HEARD A LOT ABOUT YOU FROM YOUR SISTER BACK WHEN WE WERE KIDS!
HEY, THAT'S A NICE CAMERA. DID YOU COME TO TAKE PHOTOS?
YES...
YEAH, THIS AREA DOES HAVE SOME NICE SCENERY.
WHAT KIND OF STUFF DO YOU SHOOT?
OH... NOTHING VERY GOOD...
WAIT, SO SHE'S THE BASHFUL TYPE?

*THIS IS A WORK OF FICTION. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO ANY ACTUAL PERSONS, ORGANIZATIONS, OR EVENTS IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL.

NISHI-MIYA!
OH...
UH...
I'VE GOTTA MAKE CONVER-SATION...
...
IS THERE ANYONE ELSE YOU WANT TO SEE? LIKE, FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL...
...
...

STARE
WUH... WHAT?
ME?
NO, THERE'S NO ONE.
I DON'T WANT TO SEE ANY-ONE...
I MEAN, WHY WOULD I...
WANT TO SEE ANY OF THOSE JERKS FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL...?


?
REALLY?

WHAP WHAP
WHO CARES ABOUT ME ANY-WAY?
I DIDN'T REALLY HAVE ANY FRIENDS BACK THEN.

...!
THERE'S NO ONE, REALLY!!

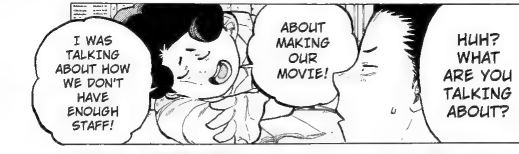
OH... NO, I'M SORRY...
THAT WAS MY BAD...
DON'T LET IT BOTHER YOU TOO MUCH...
BO NK
GO HOME, YOU PIECE OF CRAP.
OH...
YEAH...

I GUESS I'LL HEAD HOME...
THEN...

SHE'S SO NICE...
DON'T TELL THAT IDIOT YOU'LL "SEE HIM LATER," SIS!!

BOY, I SCREWED UP THIS TIME...I CAN'T BELIEVE I YELLED AT HER JUST BECAUSE I THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED BACK THEN...

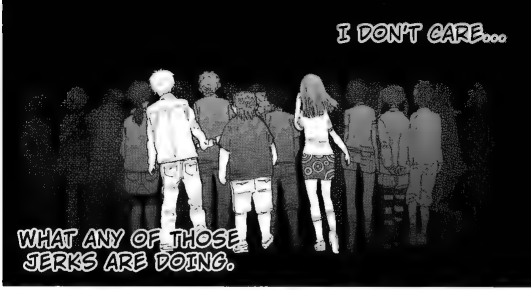
WELL, IT TRULY IS A PROBLEM WE CAN'T GET AROUND.
AND IT'S TRUE THAT YOU REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY FRIENDS, SHOYA.


I WAS TALKING ABOUT HOW WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH STAFF!
ABOUT MAKING OUR MOVIE!
HUH? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

OH, I TALKED TO THEM, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE'S BUSY.
ASK YOUR FRIENDS TO HELP.
WE'LL NEED ACTORS, AND SOMEONE TO HANDLE THE MUSIC...AND COSTUMES...
OH... YEAH...
HIROSHI, TAKASHI, AND...MASASHI HAVE TO WORK.
AND SATOSHI, HISASHI, AND YASUSHI ALSO HAVE TO WORK.
WE CAN JUST ASK SOME OF YOUR OLD CLASSMATES. AREN'T THERE ANY OF THOSE AROUND?

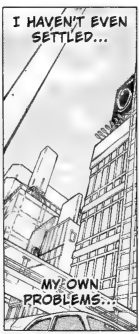
NO, THERE'S NOT!!
DON'T YOU KNOW THAT?
BASICALLY THE ONLY FRIEND I CAN TALK TO...
...IS YOU.

...
SORRY...
I DON'T CARE WHAT MY OLD CLASSMATES ARE DOING...
KNOWING WHAT NISHIMIYA IS UP TO NOW IS ENOUGH FOR ME.
KAWAI'S BEEN THE SAME "HONORS STUDENT" CHARACTER SINCE WE GRADUATED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL...
SHIMADA AND HIROSE...
I DON'T EVEN WANT TO THINK ABOUT THEM!...
YOU'RE A VIRGIN, AREN'T YOU?
AND I HAVEN'T HEARD A WORD OUT OF UENO SINCE THE ONE TIME SHE TALKED TO ME BACK IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.

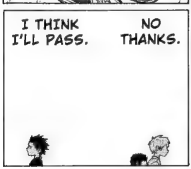

I DON'T CARE...
WHAT ANY OF THOSE JERKS ARE DOING.

...

HOW WOULD I EVEN "SETTLE" THIS ANYWAY?
BE FRIENDS WITH THEM AGAIN?


I HAVEN'T EVEN SETTLED...
MY OWN PROBLEMS...

I'M SUCH AN IDIOT...


I THINK I'LL PASS.
NO THANKS.

I'LL CUT OFF THE PAST...
THAT'S HOW I'LL SETTLE THINGS AND SAVE MYSELF.
WELL, IT DOESN'T MATTER. ME AND NISHIMIYA ARE DIFFERENT.
...WHY DOES NISHIMIYA EVEN AGREE TO SEE THE LIKES OF ME?
I DON'T CARE.
I DON'T CARE.
THAT'S RIGHT. I DON'T CARE.
I'LL FORGET EVERYTHING ABOUT THEM, THEIR FACES AND ALL.
I BET I WON'T CARE ANYTHING ABOUT THEM...
...FROM NOW ON EITHER.
HAVE A COUPON!

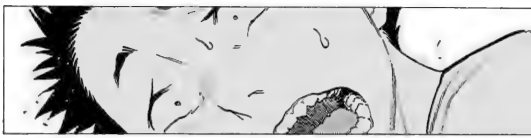
FWI
SH

UE...
TAP
NO?
TAP
WAS THAT...
TAP
TAP
TAP
I DON'T CARE!
I DON'T CARE!!!
I DON'T CARE.
TAP
TAP
TAP
I DON'T CARE.
I DON'T CARE.

I DON'T CARE!!
I WON!
GOOD...
GLANCE
屋内駐車場

I DON'T THINK SO...

YOU'RE NOT GETTING ME INTERESTED!!



■TO BE CONTINUED!
THE PAST SHOYA THOUGHT HE HAD LEFT BEHIND
COMES BACK TO HAUNT HIM WEARING CAT EARS?!

YOSHITOKI OIMA
UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE JAPANESE FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

*THIS IS A WORK OF FICTION. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO ANY ACTUAL PERSONS, ORGANIZATIONS, OR EVENTS IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL.

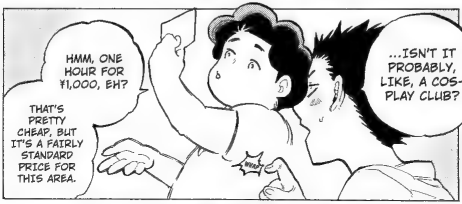
30%OFF
...
GLANCE

MEOW-MEOW CLUB?!!

MEOW-MEOW CLUB...

"MEOW-MEOW"...
...
MUTTER MUTTER
MUTTER

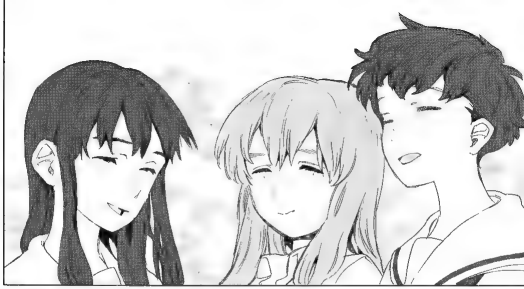
IS THAT SOME RAUNCHY JOINT?
NO!


...ISN'T IT PROBABLY, LIKE, A COS-PLAY CLUB?
HMM, ONE HOUR FOR ¥1,000, EH?
THAT'S PRETTY CHEAP, BUT IT'S A FAIRLY STANDARD PRICE FOR THIS AREA.

SHE GAVE IT TO ME WITHOUT SAYING ANY-THING...WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?
IT WAS KIND OF CREEPY...

WHY DO YOU HAVE THIS?! SPIT IT OUT!!
I GOT IT IN TOWN... FROM AN OLD CLASS-MATE...
WHAM
WAS IT A GUY?! ARE YOU FRIENDS ?!!!
REAL-LY ?!
NO, IT WAS A GIRL... WE'RE NOT FRIENDS...

SHE PROBABLY WANTS YOU TO COME TO THAT CLUB, RIGHT?
LET'S GO. I'M BUYIN'...
...
NO...
CRUNCH
I'M NOT GOING.
IT'S AN AWKWARD RELATION-SHIP...
SERI-OUSLY...
IN FACT, IT KIND OF HURTS JUST THINKING ABOUT HER...
I MEAN...



NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT...
...?! THERE'S NO WAY, RIGHT?!

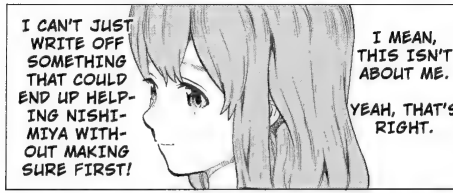
GIMME THAT!
MAYBE UENO HAS CHANGED TOO...
BUT YOU COULD SAY THE SAME OF ME...

WOULDN'T THAT BE WONDERFUL?
WHAT IF THEY COULD ALL BE FRIENDS?

CAN I HOLD OUT HOPE HERE?

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF I BROUGHT THEM TOGETHER?

IS UENO NECESSARY IN NISHI-MIYA'S LIFE?
UGGO.
SHE'S NOT, RIGHT?


I CAN'T JUST WRITE OFF SOMETHING THAT COULD END UP HELPING NISHIMIYA WITHOUT MAKING SURE FIRST!
I MEAN, THIS ISN'T ABOUT ME.
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT.

IN THAT CASE, I SHOULD TAKE ACTION?!
**MEOW-MEOW CLUB*
RATTLE

WELCOME!
HOW LONG WILL YOU BE STAYING?

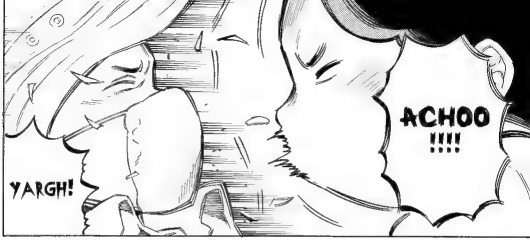
...
HOLLY WO
RIGHT THIS WAY.
...ONE HOUR.
...

...
HOLLY
MEOW
MEOW

...
BY THE WAY, IS THE GIRL IN QUESTION...HERE?
LOOKS LIKE IT WAS A CAT CAFÉ, HUH?
YEAH...
OWNER.
...DOESN'T LOOK LIKE IT.
OH, SHE'S NOT?
-:MEOW:-
-:MEOW:-
HEH HEH HEH...
ゴロ〜

MEOW!
ACHOO !!!!
YES.
MY EYES ARE ALWAYS ITCHY TOO...
BUT THEY'RE SO CUTE I CAN'T HELP BUT PLAY WITH THEM.
YAARG!
SHRP
ARE YOU ALLERGIC?
YOU KNOW HOW YOU CAN'T TELL WHAT CATS ARE THINKING?
THAT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT THEM.
YOU HAVE A POINT.
BWAHA! AS LONG AS YOU HAVE LOVE AND A LITTLE MASOCHISM IN YOU, YOU CAN BEAT A LITTLE THING LIKE AN ALLERGY, CAN YOU NOT?

BECAUSE WORDS DON'T GET THROUGH TO THEM, THEY MAKE YOU THINK...
THE WAY THEY ALLOW YOU TO USE YOUR IMAGINATION IS...VERY NICE.
WELL, I SUPPOSE SO...
OH, BUT CAN'T YOU TELL HOW A CAT FEELS THROUGH THEIR TAILS AND STUFF?
HO
WOO
...
SO EVEN AS THEY FAWN ON US, THEY MAY SECRETLY BE THINKING TO THEMSELVES, "FOOLISH HUMANS."
BUT YOU CAN NEVER TELL HOW RELIABLE THAT INFORMATION IS.
DON'T YOU THINK THAT CLERK IS CUTE ENOUGH TO STAR IN MOVIES?
...
HUH? YOU THINK SO?


ACHOO !!!!
YARGH!

SO? IT'S NOT LIKE THAT UENO-SAN OR WHOEVER IS HERE.
YOU DO HAVE A POINT...
...

AH!
MY DISGUISE!
SORRY, CAN I BORROW THAT MASK?

I DIDN'T REALLY KNOW HER THAT WELL...
I COULDN'T DEAL WITH THAT GIRL...

BY THE WAY, WHAT IS THIS UENO PERSON LIKE ANYWAY?
MROW

BUT THAT WASN'T ALWAYS THE CASE...

SHE WAS GOOD AT SPORTS AND SMART TOO.
SHE WAS THE TYPE WHO COULD TAKE CHARGE...
GOT A PROB-LEM WITH THAT?
I'M STUCK WITH YOU AGAIN?!
FOR SOME REASON, WE ENDED UP TOGETHER A LOT.
JEEZ, YOU CAN JUST STOP PEELING, ISHIDA!
YOU'RE PEELING THOSE SO SLOPPY!!
AND SHE HAD A BAD MOUTH, SO THERE WERE TIMES WHEN I THOUGHT SHE WAS PRETTY ANNOYING...
WE USED TO FIGHT ALL THE TIME.
CLEAN UP ALREADY, ISHIDA!!
BUT SHE WAS HARD ON ME, SO...
BRING IT, UGLY!!
THIS MEANS WAR!!
SHE WAS PRETTY POPU-LAR...
A GUY ASKED ME OUT YESTER-DAY.
AND PROBABLY BECAUSE SHE WAS PRETTY AND NICE...
PWISH
OH, DID HE?

LOOKING BACK ON IT, I THINK I TALKED TO HER THE MOST OF ALL THE GIRLS...

WELL... BAD STUFF.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "A LOT"?
AND THAT'S ABOUT IT...
THEN AFTER THAT, A LOT HAPPENED...

IN MY MIND, THE TWO OF US CUT ALL TIES.

...AT LEAST, I THOUGHT SO...

OH...NO, THANKS.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I WANT ONE.
IF YOU JOIN OUR MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM TODAY, YOU WILL RECEIVE A KITTY POUCH TO MARK THE OCCASION.
BEEP
BEEP

OH...
I THINK I'LL PASS.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, SIR?
TOMOHIRO... NAGATSUKA...

YOUR TIME IS UP. WOULD YOU LIKE AN EXTENSION?

THANK YOU FOR COMING.
ALL RIGHT!
-SNIFF-
HERE YOU ARE.
YEAH?
...
LIKES...
YOU KNOW, PERSONALLY, I THINK THIS UENO GIRL...
NO...
I KNOW I WILL.
BY THE WAY, DO YOU THINK YOU'LL GO BACK THERE?
NEVER-MIND.
SINCE I DIDN'T RUN INTO HER TODAY, I GET THE FEELING I WASN'T MEANT TO FIND HER.
SO, WELL, I THINK THAT'S ENOUGH...

HUFF
HUFF
I MEAN, THIS IS STILL UENO WE'RE TALKING ABOUT...
UNLIKE SAHARA, SHE HAD NO QUALMS ABOUT HATING NISHIMIYA...
SURE, MAYBE IT'S A LITTLE TOO EARLY TO DECIDE I SHOULDN'T EVER BRING THEM TOGETHER, BUT...
MAYBE I'D BE BETTER OFF WAITING UNTIL WE BUMP INTO EACH OTHER AGAIN...
UM! EXCUSE ME!!
...?
THUMP THUMP

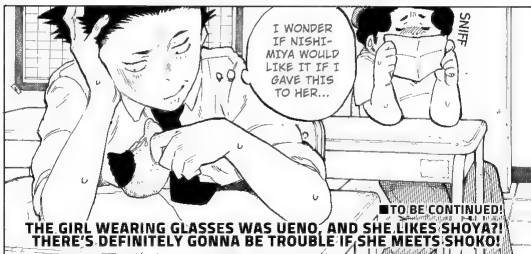
WE'RE ALSO...
GIVING THESE OUT TO FIRST-TIME CUSTOMERS...
OH, THANKS.
I'M SORRY I FORGOT.
OH!
PLOP
THAT'S OKAY!
I'LL GET IT.
I'M SORRY!
OH!

*NAMETAG: "UENO"

I've always liked you.
I FOUND IT INSIDE MY KITTY POUCH!!
WHAT DO YOU THINK?!

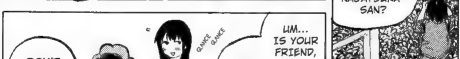
YEAH, I KNOW, RIGHT?! :SNIFF: :SNIFF:
H-HEY, GOOD FOR YOU, MAN!

WHOA!!
WH... WHOA?!
"ALWAYS"?
HUH?
HUH?
HUH?


I WONDER IF NISHIMIYA WOULD LIKE IT IF I GAVE THIS TO HER...
SNIFF
■TO BE CONTINUED!
THE GIRL WEARING GLASSES WAS UENO, AND SHE LIKES SHOYA?! THERE'S DEFINITELY GONNA BE TROUBLE IF SHE MEETS SHOKO!

I've always liked you.
FEAST YOUR EYES ON THIS!!
YOU ARE NOT DREAMING! THIS IS REAL!!
NO, IT'S FICTION!!
HUH?
NO, THERE'S NOT.
YEAH, THERE IS!!
SOMEONE REALLY GAVE YOU THAT?
BUT OF COURSE.
THERE'S DEMAND OUT THERE FOR US TURD-HEADS TOO, YUZURU-KUN. HAHA!
JUST YOU COME ALONG WITH ME!
AND I'LL GET YOU...
SOME NICE FOOTAGE FOR THAT CAMERA OF YOURS.
A SILENT VOICE
YOSHITOKI OIMA
UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE JAPANESE FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

CHAPTER 20: REASON



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FOR THIS, YOU KNOW?
THANKS, UH...
FWIP
I've always liked you.
HOLLYWOO
OH... ABOUT THAT LETTER...
COULD WE JUST... FORGET ALL ABOUT THAT?
THERE'S NO NEED TO BE BASH-FUL...
FOR I LOVE YOU AS WELL!
SQUEEZE

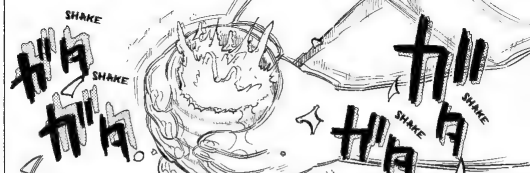
GET YOUR DISGUST-ING HANDS OFF ME!!

KEEP IT IN YOUR PANTS, FAT-BOY!!
WHO IN THEIR RIGHT MIND WOULD FALL FOR YOU?!

WOBBLE
THIS LETTER WASN'T FOR YOU.
...
YOU'RE FRIENDS WITH ISHIDA, RIGHT? DON'T TELL HIM, YOU GOT THAT?
ARE YOU... UENO... SAN?
ISHIDA-KUN? WAIT...
THAT'S RIGHT.
-SIGH- YOU RUINED MY WHOLE PLAN.
WHAT A CREEP!
I...I WAS TESTING YOU...
TO SEE IF YOU WERE A SUITABLE MATCH FOR ISHIDA-KUN...
HUH?

SOMEONE WHO JUDGES PEOPLE BASED ON THEIR APPEARANCE IS NOT SUITABLE FOR ISHIDA-KUN!
BUT THIS HAS MADE IT CLEAR.
NONE REALLY. DO I EVEN NEED A REASON?
OH, YOU KNOW HIS EMAIL ADDRESS, RIGHT? TELL ME.
STATE YOUR REASON.
IN THAT CASE, HOW CAN YOU CHOOSE BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE WHO ARE PRACTICALLY THE SAME?
CERTAINLY, ISHIDA-KUN IS A LITTLE BETTER LOOKING THAN I AM, BUT ON THE INSIDE, WE ARE THE SAME.
ESPECIALLY HOW WE TREASURE OUR BEST FRIENDS.
I DON'T THINK YOU NEED A REASON TO LIKE SOMEONE...
BUT I THINK YOU HATE SOMEONE **BECAUSE** YOU HAVE A REASON.
...
HUH? I DON'T THINK SO.
THAT IS PERSONAL INFORMATION.

YAAAARGH!!
I'M TALKING ABOUT YOU, YOU KNOW?!
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO HEAR MY REASONS, THEN HURRY UP AND WHIP OUT YOUR PHONE!!
HEY, IT'S NAOKA.
WHO'S THIS GUY?
YARGH!! A SHAKEDOWN!! IT'S A SHAKEDOWN!!
YOUR VOICE IS CREEPY!!
YOU'RE SWEATY!!!!
YOU'RE UGLY!!
YOU'VE GOT WEIRD HAIR!!
UWAHHH!
WHOA, DUDE'S FAST.


SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE

SHAKE
SHAKE
IT WAS AN UN-EVENTFUL DAY.
BUT YOU'RE SHAKING AN AWFUL LOT...
SHA
SH.

PHEW, I GOT SOME GOOD FOOTAGE TODAY.
DID SOME-THING HAPPEN?
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE

HEY, ARE WE GONNA BE ABLE TO USE THAT FOOTAGE IN THE MOVIE?
WE'RE NOT USING IT!!
"MOVIE"?

OH, THAT'S RIGHT, YUZU-RU...

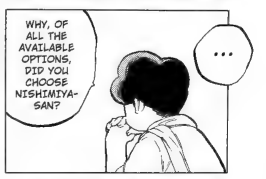
SOUNDS FUN.
YAAARGH!
HUH.

YEAH, NAGATSUKA-KUN IS...
MAKING ONE.

YOU WANNA GIVE THIS TO MY SISTER?
YEAH.
DO YOU THINK NISHI-MIYA...
WOULD USE THIS?
OH, WHAT IS IT? LET ME SEE THAT.
OH, SORRY. I ONLY HAVE THE ONE.
WHERE'S MINE?
IT'S NOT FAIR SHOKO GETS ONE AND I DON'T!!
KITTY!
CAN I HAVE THIS, SHOYA?
HEY, YOU'RE RIGHT.
I WANT ONE OF THESE TOO.
OH, HOW CUTE!

SORRY... I ALREADY DECIDED I WAS GIVING IT TO NISHIMIYA.

DO I...
?
NEED A REASON?


WHY, OF ALL THE AVAILABLE OPTIONS, DID YOU CHOOSE NISHIMIYA-SAN?
...

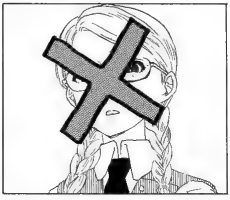
WHAT?
GRIN

キーンコーンカーンコーン
DING-DONG DANG-DONG

SHE'S GONNA GIVE ME SOME-THING?
ISHIDA-KUN.
< Incoming
from: Shoko Nishimiya
sub: It's adorable!
Thank you for the cat pouch! I'll treasure it. Please let me give you something as a thank-you.
Oh, and it seems my sister has been going to your house a lot lately. Thank you for being friends with her.
WILL YOU TEXT HER AT THIS ADDRESS?
HM, IT SEEMS LIKE NAO-CHAN WANTS TO CONTACT YOU...
OH... YES?
...!
DON'T YOU RE-MEMBER HER?
NAOKA UENO.
"NAO-CHAN"?
KAWAI?

UM...I'M SORRY, BUT COULD YOU TELL HER NO?

OH, I SEE. YOU MUST BE BUSY, RIGHT?
DO YOU HAVE A JOB?
I'LL TELL NAO-CHAN FOR YOU.



WILL YOU WAIT FOR ME BY THE SCHOOL GATE?
OH, SURE.
THERE'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE YOUR HELP WITH.
AFTER SCHOOL TODAY...
OH.
THIS IS FOR THE BEST. I KNOW IT.

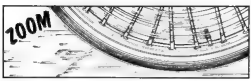
YOU CAN GO HOME, YOU KNOW, NAGATSUKA-KUN.
I'M THE ONE SHE ASKED FOR HELP.
...
WHAT'S TAKING KAWAI-SAN SO LONG?
SOME-THING'S FISHY...
KAWAI-SAN IS CON-NECTED TO UENO-SAN, RIGHT?
I DON'T TRUST THAT KAWAI WOMAN.
HUH? "GET OUT OF HERE"?
I'M MAKING A RUN FOR IT, YA-SHO!
YOU'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE TOO!!
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHAT'S THAT SUP-POSED TO MEAN?
!!
SEE YA!
LATER, MAN...

WHY ARE YOU HANG-ING OUT WITH THAT LOSER?

UENO...
HUH.
YOU REALLY HAVE GOTTEN TALLER.
OH... UH... UM...
LONG TIME... NO SEE...
THIS WAS YOUR DOING, KAWAI!
HUH? BUT WE SAW EACH OTHER THE OTHER DAY!
I WAS THE ONE WITH THE CAT EARS.
I WAS SURE YOU'D CALL ME OUT ON THOSE.
OH, THAT?!
THAT WAS YOU?
WELP, I'D BETTER GET GO-ING...
I'M GLAD I RAN IN-TO YOU.

YEAH...
LET'S GO HOME.

OUR HOUSES ARE IN THE SAME DIRECTION, RIGHT?


ZOOM

WHAT THE HECK? WHAT DO YOU WANT, UENO?

...
GO! GO!

HEY, ISHI-DA...
DO YOU HATE ME?
PLUS, DIDN'T YOU...
HATE ME?
OH, I DON'T KNOW...NOT REALLY...
...
HUH...
THE ISHIDA I KNEW...
WOULD TELL YOU STRAIGHT-UP IF HE HATED YOU.

OH!
HUH?
ISN'T THAT...
NISHI-MIYA?
Y... YEAH.
SHE HASN'T CHANGED MUCH, HAS SHE?
LIKE HOW SHE'S STILL ALL ALONE.
RIGHT?

HUH? ISN'T THAT A POUCH FROM OUR CAFÉ?
SO SHE CAME BY, HUH? UGH!
HOW CREEPY!
Hores
Plants
I GAVE THAT TO HER.

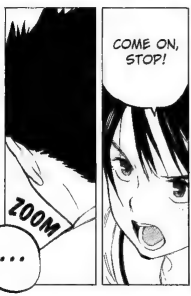
■TO BE CONTINUED!

UENO AND NISHIMIYA. AT THIS REUNION, SOMETHING WILL BREAK.

A VOICE CAN BE HEARD THROUGH YOUR EYES AS WELL.

A SILENT VOICE

YOSHITOKI OIMA
UNDER THE SUPERVISION
OF THE JAPANESE
FEDERATION OF THE DEAF



CHAPTER 25: PRETEND FRIENDS

*THIS IS A WORK OF FICTION. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO ANY ACTUAL PERSONS, ORGANIZATIONS, OR EVENTS IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL.

RISE
...
したたた
KRASH
UE...
...NO!
HANG ON!
UENO!

FWISH
LONG TIME NO SEE, NISHIMIYA-SAN!
...?
TEP
TEP
...!
...!!
UENO!
!
GRAB

WHAT, YOU'VE ONLY GOT ONE?
KLANK
!
HERE.

...

SORRY, NISHI-MIYA.

YUUKI

AREN'T YOU GOING TO TOSS IT AROUND FOR FUN...
LIKE YOU USED TO?

NO WAY! YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING ME, ISHIDA!
はは
HA HA
YOU USED TO BE SOOO INTERESTED IN THESE THINGS AND NOW YOU'RE SAYING YOU'RE SORRY?
ALL I CAN SAY IS "UM, WHAT?"
AFTER HOW BAD YOU DIS-SED HER?
HA HA
SERIOUSLY, I'M ALL LIKE "HUH? WHAT IS GOING ON?" OVER HERE.
SO WHAT'S YOUR RELA-TIONSHIP THESE DAYS, YOU TWO?
HA
YOU'RE KIND OF CREEPING ME OUT.
HA
...
W-WE'RE FRIENDS NOW... THAT'S WHY...
NOW LISTEN HERE...
I HEARD YOU'RE IN CONTACT WITH SAHARA THESE DAYS TOO!
WHAT THE HECK HAS GOTTEN INTO YOU, ISHIDA?

HAHA
HA
FIRST THE FAT KID WITH THE AFRO, THEN SAHARA, AND NOW NISHI-MIYA?
THE OLD ISHIDA NEVER WOULD HAVE HUNG OUT WITH THESE LOSERS IN A MILLION YEARS!
ARE YOU FORCING YOURSELF TO HANG OUT WITH THEM?
HAHAHA
HA
HAHAHAHA
...
...
HAHAHA
...

HAHAHAHA
...

I BUMPED INTO HER JUST NOW...
WHAP

...

HAHAHA! HILARIOUS!

HERE YOU GO!
LET'S HANG OUT SOMETIME.
SORRY, NISHIMIYA-SAN. I'LL LET YOU GET BACK TO YOUR... SHOPPING? WAS IT?

WHAT WERE WE TALKING ABOUT?
OH... NOTHING REALLY...
WORTH MENTION-ING...
Plar
WHAP WHAP
...
HAHA...
...
UM...

...
SORRY...

...I THINK...
I'M GONNA HEAD HOME FOR TODAY...

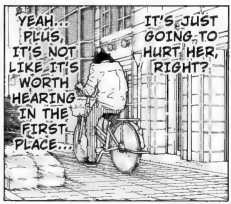
WH-WHAP
WHAP

...

SEE YA...

CLANK

DO I REALLY HAVE TO TELL HER?



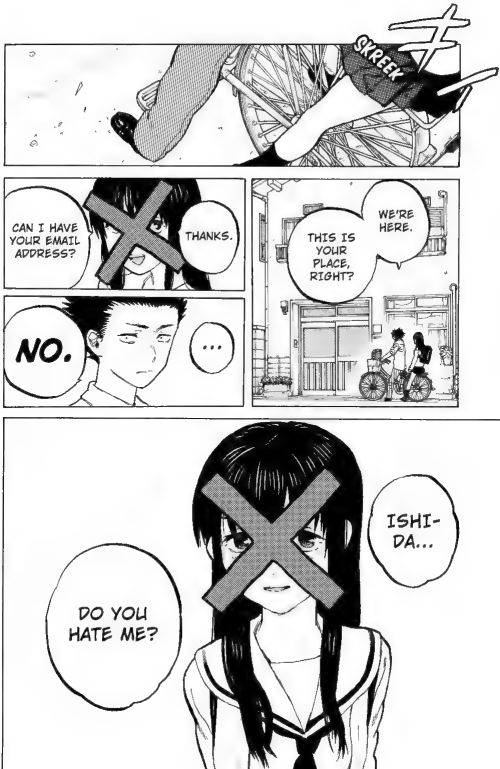
WHAT'S UENO'S DEAL ANYWAY? DID SHE TRACK ME DOWN JUST TO CAUSE TROUBLE? FOR WHAT?

AND JUST LOOKING AT HER FACE GIVES ME A HEADACHE...
IT'S NO USE. THE MORE I THINK ABOUT IT, THE LESS SENSE SHE MAKES...
...BUT HERE I AM CHAUFFEURING HER AROUND...
I DON'T NEED HER! I DON'T NEED THE PERSON KNOWN AS "UENO" IN MY LIFE!
SO...
HOW LONG HAVE YOU TWO BEEN GOING OUT?

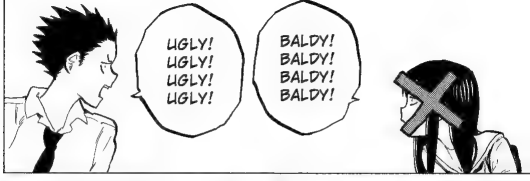
G...
DIDN'T I TELL YOU WE'RE ONLY FRIENDS !!!!
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT!! WE'RE NOT GOING OUT!
YAY, NOW HE'S PISSED.
AHA...THEN I GUESS I CRIED FOR NOTHING...
HMM?
THEN WHAT LED TO YOU HANGING OUT WITH HER?
...I REALLY REGRET-TED WHAT I DID TO HER...
BACK IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL...SO I TRACKED HER DOWN AND APOLOGIZED.

...
A PUNK LIKE YOU?
...ARE YOU SERIOUS?
I WAS DREAMING...
I THOUGHT JUST MAYBE THERE WAS A CHANCE YOU AND NISHIMIYA COULD BE FRIENDS TOO...
AND SHE ACTUALLY BECAME FRIENDS WITH SAHARA-SAN...
...SO I WENT TO YOUR CAFÉ.
SINCE NISHIMIYA HAD TO CHANGE SCHOOLS BECAUSE OF ME...
I WANT TO GET BACK ALL THOSE "POSSIBILITIES" I TOOK FROM HER.
I CONTACTED SAHARA-SAN...
BECAUSE I WANTED TO BRING HER AND NISHIMIYA TOGETHER.
I HATE NISHIMIYA-SAN!
NO WAY!
I KNOW. I'LL GIVE UP ON THAT.

BUT THAT'S JUST "PRETEND FRIENDS," ISN'T IT?
HUH?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "PRE-TEND"?
IF YOU HAVE TO GO OUT OF YOUR WAY TO GATHER THEM BEFORE YOU CAN BE FRIENDS...
THAT ISN'T EXACTLY WHAT I'D CALL A CLOSE BOND...


SKREEK
WE'RE HERE.
THIS IS YOUR PLACE, RIGHT?
CAN I HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?
THANKS.
NO.
...
ISHI-DA...
DO YOU HATE ME?

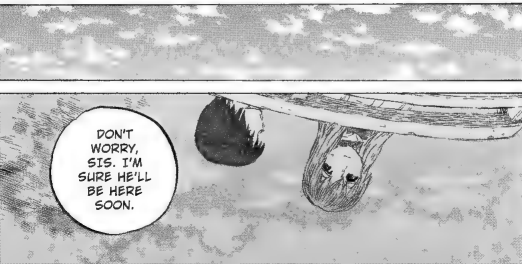
I HATE YOU.
BALDY.
RATTLE
EH HEH HEH. SEE YOU LATER.
UGLY!
SHUT UP!



WHAT IS HER PROBLEM?

I MEAN, TOMORROW IS TUESDAY..!
WELL, WHATEVER. I'LL HIT THE SACK EARLY TONIGHT...

I'LL GO MEET NISHIMIYA...
TELL HER WHAT HAPPENED TODAY AND...
...
...


DON'T WORRY, SIS. I'M SURE HE'LL BE HERE SOON.

■TO BE CONTINUED!

HE WANTS TO PROVE THEY AREN'T JUST "PRETEND FRIENDS"... BUT...NEXT TIME: THE MOST AWKWARD TUESDAY EVER.

A SILENT VOICE

ONE WEEK PASSED.

DID THE REUNION BETWEEN UENO AND NISHIMIYA KNOCK DOWN EVERYTHING SHOYA BUILT UP AND STOP TIME ONCE AGAIN?

IN THE END, I DIDN'T GO TO THE BRIDGE.

CHAPTER 22: I WANT TO KNOW

YOSHITOKI OIMA
UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE JAPANESE FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

IT'S SO NICE HAVING A BOY AROUND.

AT THE SAME TIME I WENT BACK TO MY OLD JOB.

THAT I WAS BUSY WITH MIDTERMS...

MY REASON FOR NOT GOING WAS...

ARE YOU FORCING YOURSELF TO HANG OUT WITH THEM?

"PRETEND FRIENDS"!

HAHAHAHA!

IT'S NOT LIKE IT WAS BECAUSE OF THESE WORDS.

I ASSURE YOU.

*THIS IS A WORK OF FICTION. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO ANY ACTUAL PERSONS, ORGANIZATIONS, OR EVENTS IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL.

...NO. WHY?
HEY, ISHIDA. ARE YOU SEEING ANYONE RIGHT NOW?
A FRIEND?
THEN, IS THAT UENO-SAN PERSON...
NO, I WAS JUST PERSONALLY INTERESTED.
ALWAYS
LIKES
WAS IT NISHIMIYA? DID NISHIMIYA TELL YOU TO ASK THAT?
SHE'S NOT A "FRIEND." SHE'S SOMETHING BELOW THAT. LIKE, JUST ANOTHER FACE IN THE CROWD? YOU KNOW? SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
カラ・カラ
KLANG KLANG
WE'RE CLASSMATES! JUST OLD CLASSMATES!
HUH? WHAT? WHERE'D YOU GET THAT IDEA?

KRUNCH KRUNCH
KLICK KLICK
...
CHOMP
BE CARE-FUL ON YOUR WAY HOME.
YEAH.
HEY...
DID YOU DO WHAT-EVER YOU CAME FOR?
=>PFFT<= HAHAHA!
OH... REALLY...
GUESS I'LL HEAD HOME.
WELL, NOT YET, BUT I GUESS THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH.

HUH?
IS THAT YOUR LITTLE BROTHER?
OH...
GOTTA RUN!
WHO'S THAT?
SOME KID WHO LIVES AROUND HERE...

WHADDA YOU WANT?

I CAME TO TELL YOU SOMETHING I FORGOT TO TELL YOU LAST TIME...
WELL, UM... YOU SEE...
HEHEH...

YOU KNOW HOW YOU...
KIND OF STARTED BEING OSTRACIZED IN 6TH GRADE?

LIKE WHEN WE GRADUATED MIDDLE SCHOOL...
AND I... KIND OF REGRET NOT DOING IT?
SO, YOU KNOW...
I WAS JUST THINKING...
HOW I WISHED I HAD...
TALKED TO YOU.

SO I GUESS WHAT I'M TRY-ING TO SAY IS...SORRY?
...
...

FORGET ABOUT ME!! NISHIMIYA'S THE ONE YOU OWE AN APOLOGY!!

YOU USED TO BAD-MOUTH HER ALL THE TIME, RIGHT?!
NOT TO MENTION WHAT YOU DID LAST WEEK!
APOLOGIZE TO NISHI-MIYA, AND IF SHE FORGIVES YOU...
THEN I'LL ACCEPT YOUR APOLOGY TOO!
HUH?!

WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN? YOU'RE REALLY CREEPING ME OUT NOW...
I ONLY WANTED TO APOLOGIZE TO YOU. WHERE DOES NISHIMIYA-SAN FIT INTO THIS?!
WHAT, DO YOU THINK YOU'RE HER GUARDIAN OR SOMETHING?
KLAK
KLAK
I DON'T WANT! NISHIMIYA-SAN'S! FORGIVENESS!
I WANT YOURS!
...
-SIGH-
I JUST WANTED... TO GET BACK...
OUR TIME TOGETHER...
THE TIME NISHIMIYA-SAN DESTROYED!

I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOUR FACE.
GET OUT OF MY SIGHT.
CHAK

NISHIMIYA-SAN MIGHT FEEL THE SAME WAY ABOUT YOU ON THE INSIDE, YOU KNOW.
SHE'S GOOD AT THOSE *POLITE* SMILES.

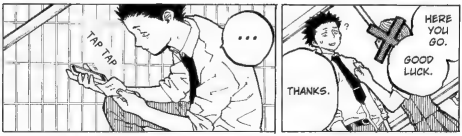
...

I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOUR FACE.
GET OUT OF MY SIGHT.
THUNK
SKITCH SKITCH SKITCH
...AA-AAA-AAH!
HAA-AAA-AA...

ISHIDA.
THAT POLITE SMILE IS JUST A HABIT OF HERS.
SIS USES IT ON ME TOO.
OKAY?
SO DON'T LET IT BOTHER YOU.
IF YOU DON'T WANT ME TRYING TO CHEER YOU UP ANY-MORE...
THEN STOP ALL THIS BROOD-ING.
YUZU-RU...
I THINK IT'S A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER.
IN FACT, SHE'S BECOME A LOT MORE EXPRESSIVE SINCE YOU SHOWED UP.

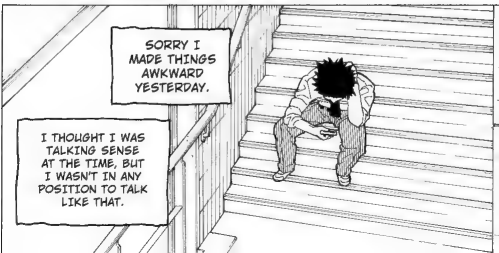
SEE YA...
THUNK
AND YOU GOTTA COME TO THE BRIDGE TUESDAY.
LOOKS LIKE SIS HAS SOMETHING TO GIVE YOU.
THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG, YUZURU!...
I THINK I'M PROBABLY THE KIND OF GUY WHO CAN'T MAKE PROGRESS UNLESS HE BROODS...

SEE? I TOLD YOU YOU'D NEED IT, ISHIDA-KUN.
HUH?
YOU NEED NAO-CHAN'S EMAIL ADDRESS?


TAP TAP
...
HERE YOU GO.
GOOD LUCK.
THANKS.

sub: TO UENO

TO UENO. IT'S ME, ISHIDA.

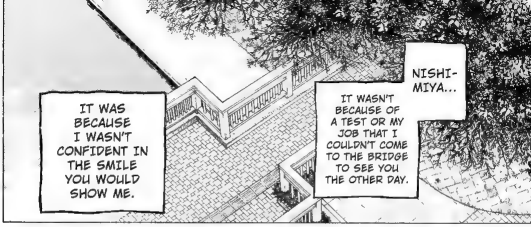

SORRY I MADE THINGS AWKWARD YESTERDAY.
I THOUGHT I WAS TALKING SENSE AT THE TIME, BUT I WASN'T IN ANY POSITION TO TALK LIKE THAT.

JINGA-LING
NOW THEN...
SO PLEASE JUST FORGET WHAT I SAID.
THANKS FOR COMING.
SEE YOU NEXT TIME.
SEND

WHAP
THAT WAS FAST!

sub: "Next time"?
Huh?
I was gonna come no matter what you said!! Later!

...
...EH?
"LATER"...


NISHI-MIYA...
IT WASN'T BECAUSE OF A TEST OR MY JOB THAT I COULDN'T COME TO THE BRIDGE TO SEE YOU THE OTHER DAY.
IT WAS BECAUSE I WASN'T CONFIDENT IN THE SMILE YOU WOULD SHOW ME.

"WHAT WERE YOU TALK-ING ABOUT?"
"WHAT?"
SO I WANT TO KNOW... WHAT IT IS YOU'RE THINKING.

HEY THERE, ISHIDA-KUN.
OH.

WHERE'S NISHI-MIYA?
SHE JUST LEFT BE-CAUSE HER STOMACH WAS HURTING.
HUH?
OH... IS SHE OKAY?
WHAT? AW, MAN...
OH, I THINK IT WAS A LIE ANYWAY.
"A LIE"?
OH, I KNOW. WHY DON'T YOU RUN DOWN TO THE BAKERY BY THE STATION AND BUY SOME BREAD, ISHIDA?
HUH? WHY?
TO FEED THE FISH! SIS LEFT, SO THE FISH ARE STARVING!
WHAT? WHY DO I HAVE TO--
JUST GO AL-READY!
AND IT HAS TO BE FROM THE BAKERY BY THE STATION! THAT'S THEIR FAVORITE!
WHAT A PAIN IN THE BUTT!
SHOVE
HUH... SO NISHI-MIYA'S NOT HERE...
THIS MAKES TWO WEEKS SINCE WE'VE TALK-ED...

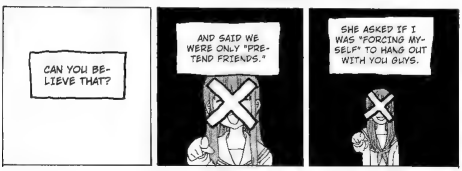
...

PHIP

SKREE

I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU WHAT I WAS GOING TO SAY AT THE BRIDGE TODAY.
IS YOUR STOMACH ALL RIGHT?
TO NISHI-MIYA.

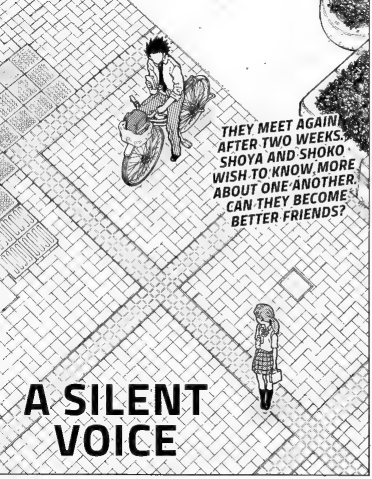
WELL, THIS IS WHAT SHE SAID ABOUT US:
YOU KNOW WHEN YOU WANTED TO KNOW WHAT UENO SAID?

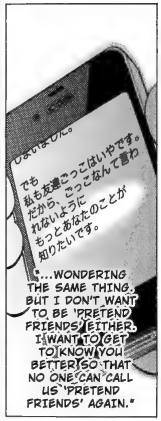

CAN YOU BE-LIEVE THAT?
AND SAID WE WERE ONLY "PRE-TEND FRIENDS."
SHE ASKED IF I WAS "FORCING MY-SELF" TO HANG OUT WITH YOU GUYS.

I WAS WONDERING THE SAME THING.

■TO BE CONTINUED!

THE FIRST TIME HE'S SEEN SHOKO IN TWO WEEKS. THE FIRST TIME HE'S HEARD HER SAY SHE WANTS "TO KNOW" HIM. WHAT WILL SHOYA TELL HER?


THEY MEET AGAIN AFTER TWO WEEKS. SHOYA AND SHOKO WISH TO KNOW MORE ABOUT ONE ANOTHER. CAN THEY BECOME BETTER FRIENDS?
A SILENT VOICE


...WONDERING THE SAME THING. BUT I DON'T WANT TO BE 'PRETEND FRIENDS' EITHER. I WANT TO GET TO KNOW YOU BETTER SO THAT NO ONE CAN CALL US "PRETEND FRIENDS' AGAIN."

YOSHITOKI OIMA
UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE JAPANESE FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

*THIS IS A WORK OF FICTION. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO ANY ACTUAL PERSONS, ORGANIZATIONS, OR EVENTS IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL.

I VEEL BEDDER NOW...
HMM?
YOU'RE OKAY NOW?
WEAH YOU GOIG, ICHIDA-KUU?
HUH?
OH...
WHERE AM I GOING?

YUZURU TOLD ME TO BUY SOME BREAD.
SHE DIDN'T HAVE ANY-THING TO FEED THE FISH.
BUD SHE'S SUBBOSED DO HAB SUB ALREADY... YUJUHU JUSD WANDS DO EAD ID.
YOU DON'D HABDO BUY ANY BED, ICHIDA-KUU!
OH... UH...
WAIT A SECOND.
SIGN LAN-GUAGE.
USE SIGN LAN-GUAGE.
WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO HER?
...
JUST WANTS TO EAT IT
DON'T HAVE TO BUY ANY
OHHH... SO YUZURU WAS JUST HUNGRY...

...?
...
...
...
"ME"
"VOICE"
"WEIRD"?

YEAH...
OH, SORRY!
THAT WAS TOTALLY FINE!!
SHE'S NOT LOOKING!!
PAT

YOU'RE FINE...
JUST THE WAY YOU ARE.

...

...

SHE SMILED A LITTLE!

I'D BETTER GET GO-ING.
OH... WELP.
KLUNK

...A THANK-YOU GIFT?
WHAP

RUS
TLE
CAN I LOOK?
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO THAT.
AW. THANKS.

...?

CANDY?
SNIFF SNIFF
OH, I GUESS NOT.
WHAT THE HECK... ARE THESE?
HEY, THANKS. I LIKE THESE.
SERIOUSLY, WHAT ARE THEY?
SEE YA.

But I don't want to be "pretend friends" either. I want to get to know you better so that no one can call us "pretend friends" again.

...I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT NISHIMIYA EITHER.

UGH, AND THAT WAS A GOOD CHANCE TO LEARN ABOUT HER TOO.

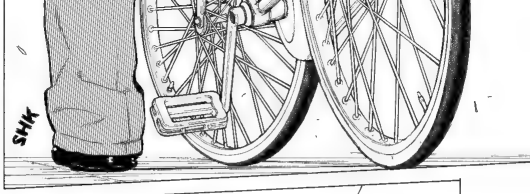
I SHOULD HAVE ASKED ABOUT HER HAIR, OR WHY SHE SPOKE, OR ABOUT THESE THINGS SHE GAVE ME.
AM I SCARED? AM I SCARED OF LEARNING ABOUT HER?
CHAK
IF I LEARN ABOUT HER, I'LL PROBABLY...
NO, I'LL DEFINITELY...
THINK BACK TO THE 6TH GRADE...
...

IF IT WEREN'T FOR HIM...
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SO MUCH EASIER TO FIND OUT HOW SHE FEELS...
I WANT TO KILL THE OLD ME...
AHHHHH! I WANNA KILL HIM!

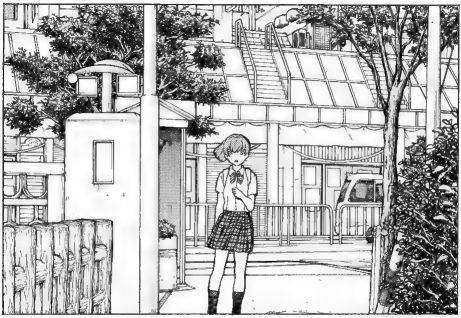
DA!
ICHI!
KUU!
キィィィィ
SKREEEK

I...

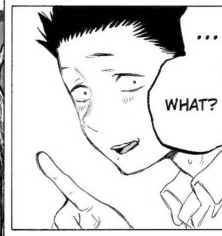
LUB
MOO!


SHIK

HUH?!
D-DID YOU SAY SOME-THING?



I LUB...
MOO...


...
WHAT?

HUH? SORRY.
I DIDN'T QUITE CATCH THAT.
USE SIGN LANGUAGE.
LUB...
MOO...

"THE MOON"?
OH.
...
NOD NOD
NOD NOD

CHAPTER 23: MOON

...
...
YEAH...IT IS PRETTY, ISN'T IT?

?!
ZOOM
■TO BE CONTINUED!